



## Natural and Beneficial Functions of Floodplains

*The Community Rating System (CRS) encourages state, local and private programs and projects that preserve or restore the natural state of floodplains and protect these functions:*

- Floodplains in their natural state have an important impact on flooding. Flood waters can spread over a large area in floodplains that have not been encroached upon. This reduces flood velocities and provides flood storage to reduce peak flows downstream. Natural floodplains reduce wind and wave impacts and their vegetation stabilizes soils during flooding.
- Floodplains in their natural state provide “ancillary beneficial functions” beyond flood reduction. Water quality is improved in areas where natural cover acts as a filter for runoff and overbank flows; sediment loads, and impurities are also minimized. Natural floodplains moderate water temperature, reducing the possibility of adverse impacts on aquatic plants and animals.
- Floodplains can act as recharge areas for groundwater and reduce the frequency and duration of low flows of surface water. They provide habitat for diverse species of flora and fauna, some of which cannot live anywhere else. They are particularly important as breeding and feeding areas.

*Remember: Floodplains perform certain natural and beneficial functions that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.*